



Indianapolis

Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor



**United Way
of Central Indiana**

*Addressing today's needs.
Reducing tomorrow's.®*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR'S OFFICE, UNITED WAY KICK OFF 2011 WINTER ASSISTANCE FUND

AREA DONORS STEP UP TO ENSURE LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO NEED HELP MOST STAY WARM

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard and United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) President and CEO Ellen K. Annala today kicked off the 2011 Winter Assistance Fund drive by accepting \$215,000 from four local donors, putting the fund within \$135,000 of the goal of \$350,000 set by United Way and the City of Indianapolis.

"The Winter Assistance Fund is one of Indianapolis' great collaborations," said Mayor Ballard. "It speaks volumes about the character of our local companies, foundations and residents that we are able to meet the needs of so many Indianapolis residents. The fund has had a dramatic impact on the community and so have the contributions of individuals who recognize how great the need is for their neighbors."

Calls for utility assistance to Connect2Help, a United Way agency that operates the 2-1-1 telephone information and referral service, have skyrocketed 387 percent in the past five years, and United Way anticipates the increased need to continue. The start-up contributions announced today are \$75,000 from Citizens Energy Group, \$50,000 from Indianapolis Power & Light, \$80,000 from Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and \$10,000 from The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate.

The Winter Assistance Fund is for Marion County residents whose income exceeds guidelines for government energy assistance, yet still have difficulty keeping up with high winter heating bills. Last year, the fund helped 1,376 households, including seniors and families with children, by raising \$450,167 in assistance.

“We are now in the third year of this economic downturn. Families who have been ‘just holding on’ are moving into crisis, and the organizations who serve them are also facing resource challenges. Keeping people fed, in their homes, and warm must be a priority for our community, if we are to avoid increases in homelessness, hunger and death,” Annala said.

Residents can dial Connect2Help 2-1-1 to find the nearest neighborhood community center or township trustee office to apply for help through the Winter Assistance Fund.

Customers of Citizens Energy Group and IPL will receive Winter Assistance Fund contribution envelopes in their gas and electric bills, providing opportunities for individuals to give to the fund. Contributions are tax deductible and can also be made online at www.uwci.org or by mailing a check to: United Way of Central Indiana, Winter Assistance Fund, P.O. Box 660054, Indianapolis, IN 46266-0054.

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